

IN THE CLAIMS

1-20. (Canceled)

21. (New) A method for renting and charging a storage system, in which an owner of a storage system rents and charges the storage system to a user of the storage system, comprising the steps of:

 sending a user identification ID, a usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage and an additional volume that cannot be used unless said user conducts a new operation for adding the additional volume with an operating unit from said storage system to a charging system; and

 charging said user of said user identification ID for said usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage and said additional volume added by said new operation.

22. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 21, wherein a usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage and said additional volume include at least one of a disk volume and a cache volume provided in said storage system.

23. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 21, wherein charging for a usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage is calculated by compensation for said usable volume, and charging for said

additional volume is calculated by compensation for a used volume of said additional volume.

24. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 22, wherein charging for a usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage is calculated by compensation for a volume, and charging for said additional volume is calculated by compensation for a used volume of said additional volume.

25. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 23, wherein charging for said additional volume is further calculated by compensation for an unused volume of said additional volume.

26. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 24, wherein charging for said additional volume is further calculated by compensation for an unused volume of said additional volume.

27. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 24, further comprising the step of: transferring starting information for indicating that said user starts using said storage system from said storage

system to said charging system, wherein the charging system starts charging to the user.

28. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 25, further comprising the step of:

transferring starting information for indicating that said user starts using said storage system from said storage system to said charging system, wherein the charging system starts charging to the user.

29. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 28, wherein charging is started after a predetermined period elapses from the point of reception of said starting information.

30. (New) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 28, further comprising the step of:

starting charging after a predetermined period elapses from the point of reception of said starting information by said charging system.

31. (New) In a system having a storage system that is owned by an owner and rented to a user, a method for renting and charging for the use of the storage system comprising the steps of:

providing the user with an initial volume of storage space of the storage system;

charging the user for use of the initial volume at a predetermined rate;

providing an added volume of storage space of the storage system as needed by the user;

charging the user for a portion of the added volume that is actually used by the user;

wherein the owner of the storage system is notified when the user begins using a portion of the added volume.

32. (New) The method according to claim 31, wherein after a fixed period of time determined by a contract, the user is charged for the portion of the added volume actually used and a percentage of the portion of added volume that is not used.

33. (New) The method according to claim 31, wherein information about the state of use of the storage system by the user is recorded in a management table, and wherein the state of use information stored in the management table is used in order to determine how much the user is to be charged for renting the storage system.

34. (New) The method according to claim 31, further comprising the step of:

copying data stored in a first portion of the storage system into a second portion of the storage system and charging the user for the use of the second portion of the storage system at a rate lower than for use of the first portion of the storage system.

35. (New) The method according to claim 31, further comprising the steps of:

providing a display terminal to the user; and
providing a display terminal to the owner;
wherein both the user's display terminal and owner's display terminal are connected to the storage system via the internet so that both terminals can receive information regarding the state of use of the storage system by the user.

36. (New) The method according to claim 32, wherein information about the state of use of the storage system by the user is recorded in a management table, and wherein the state of use information stored in the management table is used in order to determine how much the user is to be charged for renting the storage system.

37. (New) The method according to claim 36, further comprising the steps of:

providing a display terminal to the user; and
providing a display terminal to the owner;
wherein both the user's display terminal and owner's display terminal are connected to the storage system via the internet so that both terminals can receive information regarding the state of use of the storage system by the user.

38. (New) The method according to claim 37, further comprising the step of:

copying data stored in a first portion of the storage system into a second portion of the storage system and charging the user for the use of the second portion of the storage system at a rate lower than for use of the first portion of the storage system.